

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

C1 -- Barrier layer 6, formed over integrated circuit structure 2, may comprise a conventional silicon oxide dielectric material or another conventional dielectric material such as silicon nitride, silicon oxynitride, or silicon carbide. From at least the standpoint of adhesion to other layers, it is preferable that barrier layer 6 comprise silicon oxide. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

C2 -- Turning now to Figure 3, after removal of resist mask 30, the fluorocarbon/hydrofluorocarbon etch is resumed to etch away any remaining portions of densified layer 20 at the bottom of holes 24 and then to etch holes 14 through low k layer 10 and holes 8 in barrier layer 6 to thereby form a via or contact opening down to underlying integrated circuit structure 2, as shown in Figure 3. Since densified layer 20 is formed from low k dielectric layer 10, there should be no problem of adhesion between low k layer 10 and the densified layer 20. Furthermore, when silicon-based material is used to form barrier layer 6 and low k dielectric layer 10 comprises a silicon oxide-based dielectric material, adhesion problems between barrier layer 6 and low k layer 10 should be minimized as well, thus effectively eliminating adhesion problems between the individual layers making up the compound dielectric layer. Furthermore, the formation of densified layer 20 from low k layer 10 permits a single chamber to be used for the formation of the low k dielectric layer 10 and its subsequent plasma densification treatment to form densified layer 20, thus eliminating time consuming and potentially contaminating movements of the substrate between multiple processing chambers. --